

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Church planting reaping rich rewards

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Much has been written in evangelical circles about the effectiveness of starting new churches to reach a lost world. Mississippi Baptists, however, seem largely aware of just how effective this strategy has been in reaching their own state for Christ.

The Church Planting Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board has been charged with the task of leading Mississippi Baptists to plant culturally relevant, reproducing churches in the state, and by all accounts this past year has progressed well.

According to Ed Deuschle, director of the Church Planting Department, 22 new churches have been started since spring of 2002. "Out of these 22 church plants, by the end of March 2003 we will have four new African-American churches, five Anglo churches (two of which are multiracial), twelve Hispanic churches, and one Korean," Deuschle said.

So how does a new church begin? Why plant new churches in Mississippi, which is assumed by many Baptists in the state to be overchurched?

Deuschle and his department developed a Church Planting Strategy, adopted in 2002, to address the need of starting new churches. The task of the department is to encourage churches and associations to carry out the Great Commission, beginning at home in Mississippi.

Many churches and associations have the resources, interest, and leadership available to begin new churches, Deuschle said, and the local association has shown to be the best place for initial contact. The Church Planting Department is available to partner with churches and associations in church planting possibilities.

The department will help identify the best places or people groups to target for church planting. It will also help find the resources to make the plant successful.



ENTERING INTO COVENANT — Ed Deuschle (right) presents a start-up check from the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering to Bryan Presson (second from right), pastor of the new Eagle Ridge Community Church in Raymond. Joining Deuschle and Presson are Billy Hollingsworth (left), minister of education at Wynndale Church, Terry, which is helping sponsor Eagle Ridge Church; and Eddie Hamilton, associational missions director for Metro Association in Jackson. (Photo by William H. Perkins, Jr.)

As a component of their strategy, the Church Planting Department has developed a "covenant" to be used in the new church plants. The covenant is simply a written agreement establishing a partnership between the department, the sponsoring church, the sponsoring association, and the core group of believers that provides the nucleus for the new church. The covenant signing establishes support, encouragement, and purpose, and adds an extra level of accountability to the endeavor, Deuschle said.

"We committed \$277,700 in support to the new plants," said Deuschle. "These funds come from the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. Above that, to date we've been given \$5,000 in start-up gifts, and we're supporting two pastors with a salary supplement from the Mississippi Baptist Foundation for \$24,000.

"It's amazing just how unchurched Mississippi is," Deuschle continued. "In 1900, there was one Southern Baptist church for every 993 people living in the state. Today, there's one church for every 1,378."

Statistics show that 57% of all Mississippians are completely unchurched, and 61.43% of that figure are non-evangelicals. The Gulf Coast, for example, has 94,890 people church out of a population of 363,988 — a total of 74% unchurched. In multihousing communities, which could be anything from condominiums to government housing, a staggering 90% of the population is unchurched.

For more information on how to get involved in church planting, contact Ed Deuschle at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3224 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 224. E-mail: edeuschle@mbcb.org.

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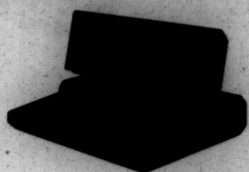
Miss. CP takes dip

Gifts to the work of the Lord through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) took a strong dip in February after setting an all-time record in January, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which disburses the funds. The \$2,244,581 given in February was down from the record \$3,501,219 given in January, but was slightly ahead of the amount given in the same month during the previous year (\$2,428,075). An average monthly total of \$2,632,732 is needed to meet the record 2003 Mississippi CP budget of \$31,592,787. The Mississippi CP budget is set each year by messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and the fiscal year runs from January to December. Mississippi Baptists surpassed their 2002 Mississippi CP budget by .08%. Mississippi CP helps fund such programs at the Campers on Mission Rally March 20-23 in Waynesboro; the Young Pastors' Retreat March 27-28 at Lake Tlak O'Khata in Louisville; and the Ministry Assistants' Conference April 7-8 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton.

SBC CP shows rise

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) are up compared to this same time frame in 2002, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. As of Feb. 28, the year-to-date total of \$78,915,285.32 for CP Missions is 1.59%, or \$1,237,089.84, ahead of the \$77,678,195.48 received at this same point last year. For the month, receipts of \$17,686,441.54 were 4.73%, or \$799,544.35, above the \$16,886,897.19 received in February 2002. Designated giving of \$83,310,310.34 for the same year-to-date period is 1.46%, or \$1,230,128.82, below receipts of \$84,540,439.16 received at this point in 2002. The \$50,087,771.36 in designated gifts received last month is \$2,831,053.81 below the \$52,918,825.17 total of February 2002, a 5.35% decrease. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$78,915,285.32 is 107.03% of the \$73,734,334.15 budgeted, or \$5,180,951.17 more to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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America at war

So it will be war. With the President's speech on Monday evening of this week, we have resigned ourselves to the reality of armed conflict with Iraq in hopes of deposing a tyrannical regime and eliminating its terrifying arsenal of chemical weapons, biological agents, and who-knows-what-else. With a determined President and a defiant dictator, it probably couldn't have unfolded any other way.

Within hours of the President's speech, Iraqi troops began trying to surrender to anyone they thought was American or British. Some people in the know believe this war will be short and sweet, while others are concerned that a few nasty surprises are in store for the invasion force when it finally does move into the country.

Reports indicate that Iraq's ruling madman, Saddam Hussein, will probably have the opportunity to fulfill his oft-expressed desire to go down as an Arab/Muslim martyr. Further reports indicate that he intends to take Israel and even his own country with him. He may have already loaded his remaining ballistic missiles with chemical and biological warheads, and it's common knowledge that he plans to destroy as many of Iraq's natural and economic resources as possible in the opening hours and days of the war.

If Israel is attacked and chooses to retaliate, no one can say for sure what the effect will be on the military campaign or the entire Middle East, for that matter. Meanwhile, Turkish troops are massing on Iraq's northern border with the stated purpose of preventing a revolution that would bring Turkey's ancient enemies, the Kurds, to power in that part of Iraq. The Kurds have said they will challenge any incursion by the Turks.

Some of our oldest and most trusted allies are turning their backs on us in this

crucial hour, but not all of them. Even some of our own politicians have stepped forward to condemn the war effort. Much like the Judiazers in the days of the Apostle Paul, however, they are full of criticism but devoid of any better ideas. Some things really don't change.

The debate continues on whether this is a "just" war, and even on the definition of just war (see page five of this issue). There is room in America for good people to respectfully disagree with each other, but too much of the debate has not been respectful.

Then there's the law of unintended consequences, known during armed conflict as the fog of war. Just about anything a commander doesn't want to happen can happen in that fog, and some of the things he wants to happen won't happen. Very few of us will be unaffected by the war, from loved ones who will see

combat to victims of terrorism threatened by a host of groups if the war takes place.

It's time to pray. It doesn't matter how one feels about the war; it's simply time to pray. Pray for the soldiers who will be following their orders. Pray for the commanders who will be making life-and-death decisions for those troops. Pray for the innocent people who will be caught in the middle. Pray for the families of all who are involved. Pray for the President.

Pray that peace will ultimately prevail, because it's never too late to pray for peace.



After all, there's a reason why Christians refer to our Lord and Savior as the Prince of Peace. Pray that somehow, someday, the cause of Christ will be furthered by this action even if we don't fully understand how He will ultimately accomplish that feat.

Of course, the part we do understand is that however He chooses to accomplish that feat, He will accomplish it through His people.

May we be found willing and capable for the task. That should be our most earnest prayer.

GUEST OPINION:

Health insurance and our churches

By Lynn P. Clayton, editor
Louisiana Baptist Message

through the Southern Baptist Annuity Board for employees of the paper, doctors were able to treat me immediately and provide the best health care.

I, or my family, did not have to struggle with, "What is the best treatment for the money?" My case worker with the Annuity Board took care of that at every turn. I had no experience or statistical understanding of how to relate to the health care givers, but my case worker did and she was compassionate and excellent.

Since my illness, the Annuity Board's health care processors have continued to work with me in my recovery. They have worked with physical, occupational, and speech therapists to see that my recovery has gone absolutely as well as possible. I have never felt they were working against me to save money, but to provide the best care possible. Doctors say I am well

ahead of the recovery curve.

My experience has reaffirmed in no uncertain terms that every Baptist church should provide adequate health care insurance for their ministers and support staff — and I emphasize that the church should provide the insurance for the ministerial staff and as much of the support staff as possible.

The church should not force employees to provide their own health insurance under the guise of such misconceptions as "total packages." Health insurance is a benefit, but it should not be under the mislabeling of salary or total package.

Based upon my personal experience, I strongly recommend the Annuity Board.

A fact of life is that the Annuity Board health insurance is sometimes higher than other policies available, but there is good reason for this.

The Annuity Board provides insurance for older ministers who have been faithful in their service to Southern Baptist churches. The older a minister, the more expensive providing proper health care becomes. The Annuity Board does not drop insured persons because they become older.

Some churches have been more interested in the bottom line of cost rather than looking at the overall ministry of the Annuity Board, so the Annuity Board has an overload of older ministers that forces the cost at times to be higher than other insurance providers. However, the quality of benefits has been, in my experience, unsurpassed.

With a renewed passion that has grown out of my good fortune to be employed by a compassionate agency, I strongly implore Baptist churches to provide health insurance for their ministers and as much of their support staff as possible. I know what it means to have it, and I know what it would have meant if I had not had it.

I strongly recommend churches give primary consideration to the Annuity Board. I would be a selfish ingrate if I did less.

The Louisiana Baptist Message is the news journal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and is based in Alexandria.

Homosexual advocates targeting Nashville?

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — It's not a stretch to say that Nashville is a key battleground for the homosexual-rights movement in America. What some consider the heart of the Bible belt — it has more churches per capita than any other U.S. city — Nashville is currently in the midst of a battle over a proposal to prohibit employment discrimination based on "sexual orientation" covering all metro departments, including the public schools.

The fact that the battle is taking place in a conservative region, in the center of the South, has not been lost on observers. "Maybe they have chosen the Bible belt because they know that one of the last bastions of pro-family conservatism in this country is the South," Bill Maier, a vice president and psychologist in residence for Focus on the Family, told Baptist Press. "If you can attack the South... you have achieved your goal."

The homosexual community long ago won similar battles out West and in the Northeast, having since turned their sights toward bigger goals — but Nashville has no protections based on sexual preference.

As the thinking of opponents goes, if the bill passes, more wide-sweeping legislation will follow. "This is only a prelude of things to come, so we need to stop it now," one of the bill's opponents, councilwoman Carolyn Baldwin Tucker, said.

Supporters already failed once this year in broadening the bill's reach when they withdrew a city-wide proposal covering housing and employment discrimination. It would have covered religious organizations,

tions. He did not give a direct answer, but said, "We need to remove discrimination if it's in the walls of a church, the walls of a school, or the workplace."

Such talk has conservatives taking notice. One prominent

pro-family lawyer, Alan Sears of Nashville, told Baptist Press that it's time for Christians to wake up. "This is a foot-in-the-door ordinance, as inane as it might appear," said Sears, who is president of the Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal organization that works to protect traditional family values.

Sears believes Nashville is in step one of a three-step strategy homosexual activists apply nationwide. In step one, employees ask for anti-discrimination protection.

In step two, they ask for domestic-partner benefits. In step three they push further, asking for such things as hate-crimes laws and employee sensitivity training sessions.

The pattern can be seen in cities nationwide. Colorado Springs, Colo., passed an anti-discrimination bill in 1996, and last year passed a bill requiring domestic-partner benefits. Phoenix passed an anti-discrimination bill in 1992, a domestic-partner bill in 2000. Bloomington, Ind., passed an anti-discrimination bill in 1993, a domestic-partner bill in 1997.

Each step is a natural progression from the previous step, said Sears, who is the coauthor of a forthcoming book on the issue, *The Homosexual Agenda: Exposing the Principal Threat to Religious Freedom*.



COUNCILWOMAN CONCERNED — If protection for sexual orientation is added to Nashville metro statutes, it will be "a prelude of things to come," says councilwoman Carolyn Baldwin Tucker, the leading opponent of the proposal. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

including the Southern Baptist Convention, whose statement of belief, the Baptist Faith and Message, includes homosexuality in a list of sexual sins.

"Obviously, I thought the city should take a bigger step," one of the bill's cosponsors, Chris Ferrell, told Baptist Press. "[But] I never intended for it to apply to religious institutions."

Other council members may not share Ferrell's sentiment. Baptist Press asked councilman Melvin Black if he would have favored an exemption in the previous bill for religious organiza-

Today. It is being published by Broadman & Holman, the trade books arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"They say, 'All we're asking you to do to is make a policy statement that we oppose discrimination,'" he said. "They open the door to everything, because they now recognize that homosexual behavior has a basis in law for special recognition and special protection."

"...This ordinance may look like a small thing, but it's a gigantic step for the government to say that we're going to grant legal protections and preferences to people based upon how they choose to have sex."

Once a non-discrimination law is passed, Sears emphasized: "Everything that happens

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that is not consistent with that anti-discrimination statement is an act of discrimination."

The Nashville bill's language can lead to some awkward situations for both children and parents, he said. The current bill defines "sexual orientation" as homosexuality, bisexuality, or heterosexuality.

"You might have a male teacher that decides to wear panty hose and a dress and wear lipstick to class," Sears said. "You can get into some incredibly bizarre situations where you're exposing children of tender years to this kind of behavior."

He pointed to cases nationwide involving transsexuals (people who change their sex organs via surgery). In recent years, teachers in Illinois and New York have undergone sex-change operations and kept their jobs.

Looking back

10 years ago

Schism within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is similar to transitions in most religious denominations, speakers at a conference at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary stated, but only a "statistically insignificant" number of churches were seen to be moving away from the SBC, which was noted to be in excellent health despite the decline in other denominations.

20 years ago

"Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" will be the theme for the 1983 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburg. "We wanted this to be the kind of convention which would bring us together... there are far more things that unify us than divide us," said Bruce McIver, chairman of the convention order of business committee.

50 years ago

John Jeter Hurt, editor of the Christian Index newspaper in Georgia, suggests that the Radio Commission (forerunner of the Radio and Television Commission) merge with the Home Mission Board. "It would keep two agencies of Southern Baptists from doing the same thing," Hurt stated.

...the Bible study has caused a controversy. "How did we get to this point?" he said in a FoxNews.com story. "How did we get to the point that today it's controversial to come together at a Bible study?"

Missionary Bill Hyde buried in native Iowa

SHELLSBURG, Iowa (BP) — The motorcade carrying William "Bill" Hyde's body for burial moved slowly through the Iowa countryside northwest of Cedar Rapids. In the fields, there is still snow caught in the

"The journey he took wasn't an easy one," said Dick Hyde, Bill's older brother. "The Lord had something in mind for Bill long before he was born."

His middle name was Paul and like the apostle for whom he was named, Hyde was strong-willed and opinionated, said his brother. He was big — big as a child and bigger as an adult. "His nickname was Slugger. He got it for being in fights. Lots of fights," Dick Hyde said.

By the time Hyde was in high school, his talent as a musician began to get notice. In a household of musicians, "He had the voice in our family," said Dick Hyde, "a deep bass like Tennessee Ernie Ford. He even had offers to be a professional musician." However, there were other things stirring inside him.

He served in Vietnam. He married Garlinda (Lyn), the woman who was to be his wife for 37 years. After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in music at the University of Iowa, he taught music in schools in Iowa. Still, things stirred within him.

"He could have had a quiet life, a happy life, (could have taught school) and touched lots of lives," said David Miller, pastor of Northbrook Church in Cedar Falls, "but he and Lyn chose the front lines — or rather, were chosen would be more appropriate."

In 1978, the couple was appointed as missionaries to the Philippines by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB). At first he taught MKs (missionary kids) at Faith Academy in Manila, but he had another passion — church planting — and during the latter years of his ministry in the Philippines he and Lyn

moved to Mindanao and focused on that passion. It is known that he facilitated the planting of 600 churches. In January, he hosted a Pioneer Evangelism conference. With 3,700 participants, it was probably the largest such conference ever held. There is a good possibility that 3,000 churches will result from this conference.

"This was a remarkable man," said Thurman Braughton, a recently retired IMB missionary who worked with Hyde. "This guy took what we were doing and multiplied it 10-fold, maybe 100-fold. Where we were adding, he was multiplying."

Hyde did that by training pastors and laypeople, equipping others to plant churches, rather than have those efforts depend on him or a relative few. Out of the January conference, 1,086 new church planting teams were formed. It is expected each team will plant three churches. Hyde had plans for training 150 Filipinos as trainers next year and, through them, training another 7,000 laypeople in church planting.

He was a big man with a big vision. "It is a tragedy that Bill was killed," said IMB President Jerry Rankin, "but the real tragedy would have been if Bill had not given his life to Jesus Christ. We praise God that his life — and his death — will bear much fruit. Gathered around the throne of grace will be the peoples of the Philippines because Bill was there."

"I wish everyone here could see how many people my father has touched," Bill Hyde's oldest son Tim told a packed auditorium at his parents' home church, Immanuel Church in Cedar Rapids. He told of traveling to the Philippines during the past week for two memorial services that drew thousands.

"I'm glad my dad was in the Lord's will. He was in the Lord's perfect will. That doesn't mean we won't miss him, but he's just gone on to a better place," he said.



BOND OF TRAGEDY

— Lyn Hyde (center) widow of slain missionary Bill Hyde, is comforted by Nedra White (second from right) and Larry Stevens at graveside services outside Shellsburg, Iowa. White's daughter Barbara Stevens and Barbara's 10-month-old son Nathan were injured in the Philippines bomb blast that killed Hyde. Mark Stevens, Barbara's husband and Larry Stevens' son, and their daughter Sarah were uninjured by the explosion. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

stubble from last fall's harvest. The cool air and black earth at the cemetery on the edge of Shellsburg where he was born are a sharp contrast to the tropical heat and green jungle in which Hyde lived and worked for the past 25 years.

The 59-year-old missionary was killed March 4 in a bomb blast at the airport in Davao City, on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. This day, family, friends — many who knew him from childhood — missionary colleagues, and young adults who had him as a teacher gathered from across the globe to celebrate of his life.

Nashville group may oust church

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Messengers to the September annual meeting of the Nashville Baptist Association (NBA) will consider action to withdraw fellowship from a church that has hired a lesbian minister. The Tennessean newspaper in Nashville reported Jan. 26 that last May, Glendale Church had employed April Baker as associate pastor with responsibilities related primarily to children and families.

Freedman said the NBA group advised them of the association's position on homosexuality and told them if the church did not make a change, "the Executive Board would recommend that the association withdraw fellowship from the church" at its annual meeting.

NORCROSS, Ga. (BP) — Amy Cruce's best friend hung on to the bottom of an overturned footbridge above a Honduran ravine. "I'm slipping!" she yelled. Cruce closed her eyes for just a moment. When she opened her eyes, her friend had fallen.

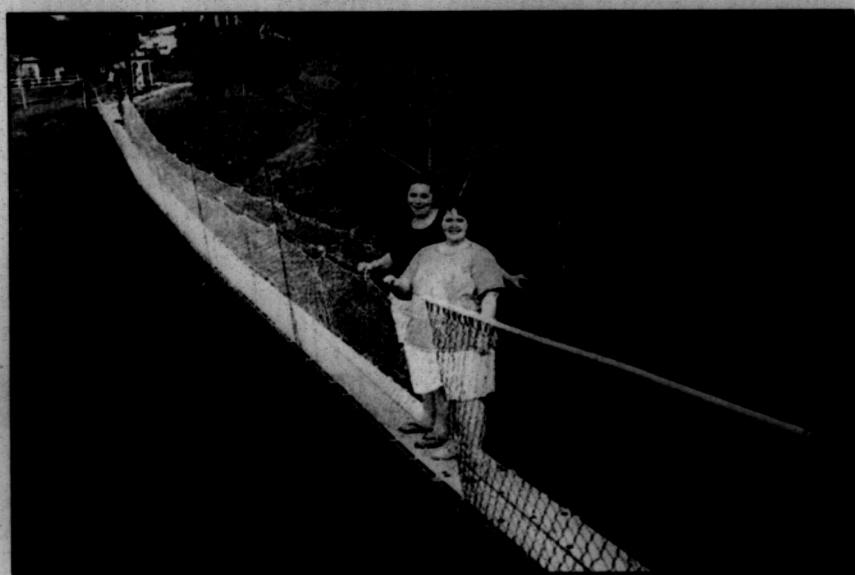
Bill Cordrey had hung on to the wooden suspension bridge as long as he could. After he fell, he looked up to see his wife hold on for just moments longer, then tumble through the air and the trees into the ravine near him.

Thrown immediately from the bridge, Ron Sheintal lay dazed on the ground in the ravine. He turned to check on his wife, who also had fallen.

Above them their 18-year-old daughter hung precariously from the swinging bridge. "Hang on, Allison! Don't let go!" he yelled.

At the bottom of the ravine, Chuck Brattain laid, unable to catch his breath. With a collapsed lung and broken bones he couldn't breathe. Less injured teammates rushed to help him.

Carol Lathe wasn't standing far from the entrance to the bridge. When it unexpectedly tipped, she was able to hold on until someone pulled her to



FATAL CROSSING — Mission volunteers Amy Cruce (front) and Susan Garcia pose for a photo on the swinging bridge from which they and 10 others would fall just a few days later during a mission trip to Honduras. (BP photo)

safety. Looking down into the ravine, nearly three stories below, she saw her husband lying motionless.

Lathe's 49-year-old husband, T.J., had fallen about 30 feet, landing on a rock at the bottom of the ravine, instantly breaking his neck. He died at the scene.

The peaceful afternoon photo shoot on the picturesque bridge had turned into a nightmare for the team from Glover Church in

Norcross, Ga. The team left Atlanta on Feb. 15 with plans to come home Feb. 23. The week-long trip to the city of Balfate included a construction team helping to expand the hospital and a medical team who helped with patients.

The group finished their work Saturday morning, the day before they were scheduled to leave. "We thought it would be a great time to get a

picture together," Cruce recalled. "A lot of teams had their picture made on the suspension bridge that stretched across the ravine between two hills. It connected the housing area with the hospital."

The group filed onto the wooden swinging bridge, holding on to the cables that served as handrails. In the next moment the center of gravity apparently shifted as the members all stood on one side, and the bridge flipped and began tossing bodies into the ravine.

Chuck Brattain, who fell next to Lathe, was critically injured in the fall and flown to a Houston hospital. He initially rallied at the Texas facility but took a turn for the worse after suffering a stroke. Brattain, age 72, died from complications on March 12. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Beverly, and two children.

"I know in times like these, non-believers will question where is God, but believers will know that God was present with us on the bridge," team leader Cordrey said.

"We already had a special bond because of the work we were doing there. I think this is going to make our church even stronger," he said.

WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE TALKING TO?

Modern communication technology creates a lot of dilemmas for folks. Through the years I have struggled with some of the problems this new technology has created. Let me give you a few examples. Have you ever called someone's home or business, maybe just returning their call, and gotten an answering machine with a strange voice on it? That voice may or may not have been the person who lives there and the message simply said, "Sorry, we can't come to the phone. Leave a message at the beep."

Have you ever called and gotten one of those computer generated, automated voices that says, "Please leave a message" and it's not even a real person talking? Now, here is the dilemma as I see it. What if you are calling to express your condolences because someone's family member has passed away and the voice that answers tells you to leave a message. You don't recognize the voice and at this point you aren't really sure you have reached the residence you were calling. The fact is you may have, by accident, hit one wrong number in dialing and now you are faced with leaving a message on someone's answering system that says something like, "I'm so sorry to hear about your dad's death. I just wanted to call and let you know that I am praying for you and if there is anything in the world we can do to help,



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

please let us know. I'll be in touch with you soon."

How do you handle leaving a message on one of those non-descript answering devices when it relates to some private information, personal dilemma, or crisis intervention? What if you are told that a particular person at a particular number is contemplating suicide and you make the call and get an answering machine with no identification? So, you go ahead and leave your message that goes something like this, "Please, don't take any action until I talk to you. I'm trying to get in touch with you. Suicide is not the answer!" Then, you find out later that you indeed had gotten hold of the wrong party!

What if you left word on an answering machine that said, "I'm sorry to hear about your wife leaving you, but you need to know that it is not the end of the world. Please call me and let's talk." Then, you find out that you left the message at the wrong place. I'm telling you, modern technology can be an awkward thing to deal with and getting some of these messages can be even more difficult to deal with.

So, what do you say when you don't know who you are talking to? Actually, as I present this problem, I would have to quickly point out to you that it didn't just begin with the invention of the telephone or the telephone answering service. Paul (Saul as he was called at the time) ran into this dilemma when he got a call from heaven on the road to Damascus. When the word came through to him, he answered and said, "Who are you Lord?" Saul was not sure if he had the right person, but the Lord knew that He had Saul's number.

It is not unusual for the Lord to be dealing with a person and for them to struggle with answering back. It is very possible that someone who is reading this has been trying to understand, interpret, unravel, and figure out how God could be calling them to preach, or to missions, or to serve in a special capacity in the church. It may be you and you realize that the circumstances around your decision-making are more than just coincidence or unusual chances in life. So many of those who have gone before us

and so many of us now can identify with how you go about knowing and then saying to God, "Lord, I want you to know I will do what you want me to do."

Moses was a great leader of God's people, but he was also a man who was just like us. When God told Moses He had a job for him, Moses wanted to know who it was that was calling. The conversation continued as God let him know it was Him speaking and He let Moses know that the proper answer to His call was, "Yes Lord." So, how do you know if God is the one who is speaking to you, calling you, or leading you? I don't want to over-simplify things nor do I want to over-complicate things, but I can tell you this — that God wants to do the best for you and He wants to bless you. God is not going to lead you to do something contrary to His word and if it is God speaking to you, He is guiding you in a direction that ultimately will bless other people also.

The most wonderful thing about the Lord when He speaks to us is the fact that we do not have to respond to a tape, or an automated answering service, or an unknown telephone trunk. The Lord comes to us live and in person when He speaks. Jesus reminded us of this wonderful feature when He said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and will open the door, I will come unto him and sup with him and he with me."

Do you hear His voice? Talk to Him right now.

Leaders call for prayer, fasting

WASHINGTON (BP) — Evangelical Christian leaders have called for prayer and fasting that a war with Iraq may be averted. Though the signers acknowledge many of them believe a conflict with Iraq would be justified, they said in an open letter "no one wants to go to war."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, is one of the signers. Other signers of the letter included Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries; Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Church in Lynchburg, Va., and chancellor of Liberty University; D. James Kennedy, senior minister of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Pat Robertson, chief executive officer of the Christian Broadcasting Network; Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse; and Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Southern Baptist ethicists conclude war 'just'

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP and local reports) — Southern Baptist speakers say the possible U.S. war on Iraq would be "just" according to historic Christian ethical principles, but former President Jimmy Carter — himself a former Southern Baptist — disagreed, saying that Bush's "apparent determination to launch a war against Iraq, without international support, is a violation of these [just war] premises."

The U.S. has sufficient moral cause to attack Iraq, according to speakers at a late February symposium at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Seminary and previously an advisor to former President George H.W. Bush, said the case against Iraq meets all the classical criteria for a just war. Heimbach is widely credited with outlining the just-war doctrine Bush employed during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. However, he cautioned against "regime change" as a valid reason for war.

Carter, in an essay in the March 8 New York Times, said the current conflict does not meet just-war criteria.

"As a Christian and as a president who was severely provoked by international crises, I became thoroughly familiar with the principles of a just war, and it is clear that a substantially unilateral attack on Iraq does not meet these standards," Carter wrote. "This is an almost universal conviction of religious leaders, with the most notable exception of a few spokesmen of the Southern Baptist Convention who are greatly influenced by their com-

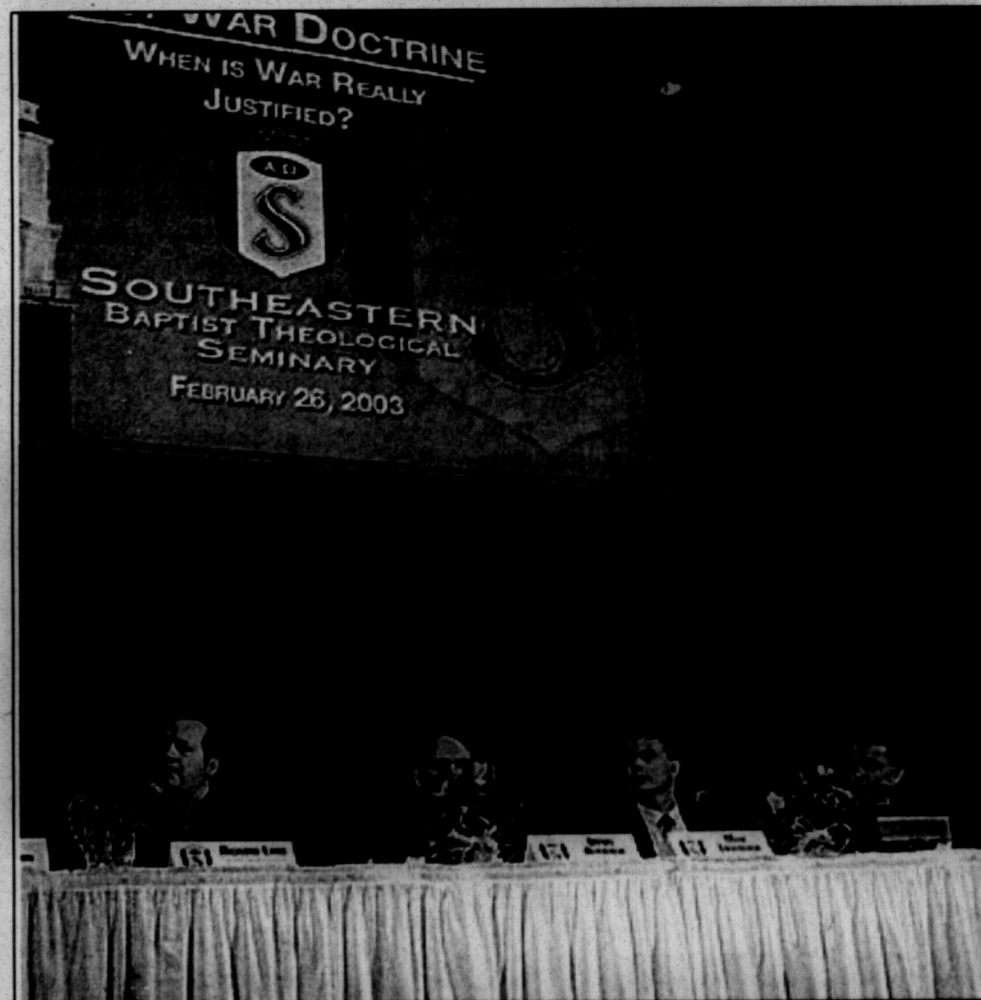
mitment to Israel based on eschatological, or final days, theology."

Carter has renounced his membership in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and moved his allegiance to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which was formed in response to the "conservative resurgence" of recent years that turned the SBC in a more conservative direction.

Heimbach told the seminary audience that the two key issues in determining whether this war is just are whether "just cause" exists and whether we have reached the point of war as a last resort.

The problem with relying heavily on just cause is that it can easily be transformed into a crusade ethic, Heimbach said. The United States still has just cause to enforce the 1991 terms of surrender at the end of the first Gulf War, he said, which was a response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. To enter Iraq with the goal of deposing Hussein, however, crosses the line into a crusade-like mentality, he said, seeking to impose American ideals on the Iraqi people.

Heimbach said he believes President Bush has provided sufficient evidence that Hussein is supporting global terrorism, which might provide just cause for a new war, but many others remain unconvinced. Thus, Heimbach said, if the president asked for his advice, "I would recommend that we not focus on what Iraq is doing to support terrorism, but focus on enforcing the terms of the 1991 surrender." Just war is based on actual wrongdoing, Heimbach said, not simply the potential for future wrongdoing.



WEIGHING WAR - Southern Baptist ethicists (from left) Richard Land, Daniel Heimbach, Mark Liederbach, and David Jones agree that war with Iraq would be morally justified, during a late February panel discussion held at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. (BP photo by Kelly Davis)

HOMECOMINGS & REVIVALS

Liberty, Liberty: April 9-13; services begin Wed., noon; nightly, 7 p.m.; Sun., afternoon services, 1 p.m., no evening service; Stan Weatherford, Fairhope, Ala., preacher; Tony Hinton, Petal, music.

Clear Springs, Coffeeville: March 30-April 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; Daniel Dickerson, O'tuckalofa, evangelist; Ed Barlow, pastor.

Trinity, Pearl: March 23; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner, 12 p.m.; Larry Russell, speaker; John Walbrecht, music; Kenneth Goff, pastor.

Belden, Belden: March 30-April 2; Sunday, 8:30 and 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Jackie Kay, speaker.

Hebron, Meridian: March 23-26; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tyrone Parten, evangelist; Barry Brand, music; Paul Earley, pastor.

Strong Hope, Wesson: March 30-April 2; nightly, 7 p.m.; Sam Brassell and Steve Walker.

Parkway, Hernando: April 27-30; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tim Lee, Garland, Texas, leader; Mike Ramage, pastor.

Zion Hill, Wesson: March 23-26; Sunday, 10 and 10:45 a.m., 6 and 6:45 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ray Cummings, speaker; Mike Lee, music minister.

Pinckney, Union: March 23-26; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tues., 11 a.m.; Bobby Douglas, preaching; Gary Thorne, music; Mike Fondren, pastor.

New Hope, Mt. Olive: March 23-26; Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Lane Varner and Jay Garland McKee, preaching; Jim Chance, music.

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BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

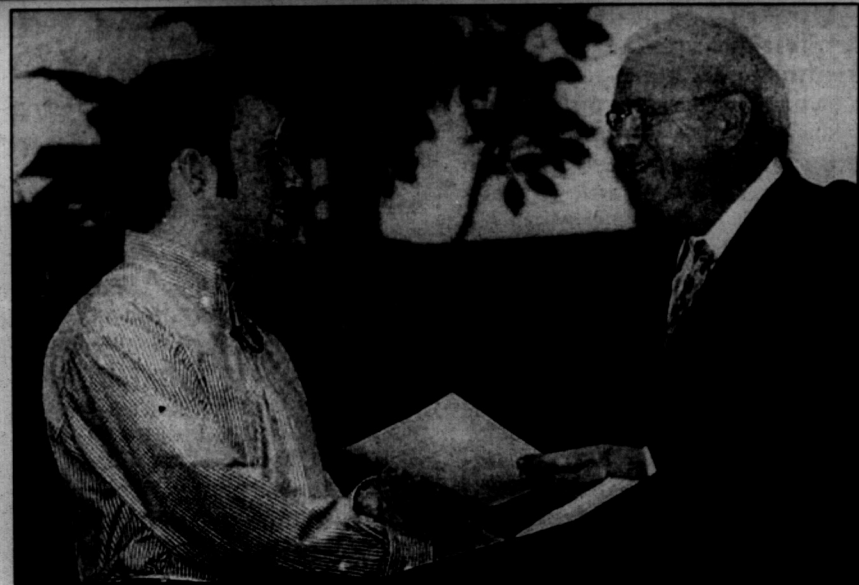


Cloyd Ezell, Ron Farris (standing from left); Parker, and Halford (seated from left)

Students of Mississippi College, Clinton, swept the competition at the University of Memphis Undergraduate Chemistry Conference on Feb. 22. Luke Gatlin won the Best Research Presentation in the Organic and Biochemistry Division award. Ashley Ringer

and Cory Toyota shared the award for Best Presentation in the Physical, Analytical and Inorganic Chemistry Division. Other students attending the conference were Jamie Brown, Crystal Cogle, Patricia Honea, Jeanann Lovell, C.J. Stephenson, and Jalin Wood.

Higher Education Appreciation Day/Working for Academic Excellence, HEADWAE, honored one student, Ryan Parker, and one faculty member, Coach Bobby Halford, assistant professor of physical education and head baseball coach, of William Carey College recently during the Fifteenth Annual HEADWAE



Treadway (left) and Bryson

program. The HEADWAE observance was established in 1988 by legislative resolution to honor individual academic achievement and the overall contribution by the state's public and private institutions of higher learning.

Major (Matt) Andrew Treadway, Clinton, a senior at

Mississippi College, is the recipient of the annual Byrd Memorial Preaching Award. The scholarship was presented during a recent chapel service on the Clinton campus at which time the winner preached the award winning sermon. Pictured (from left) are Treadway and Harold Bryson.

Seminary to withdraw funds from foundation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) — Midwestern Seminary trustees voted unanimously March 10 to remove about \$877,000 in funds from the Missouri Baptist Foundation. The funds will be invested through the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma.

Trustees voted last October to pursue removal of seminary funds from the Missouri Baptist Foundation because it is one of five Missouri Baptist Convention entities where trustees boards have voted to be self-perpetuating. As a result, the MBC is seeking a court declaration that the five trustee boards are in violation of state law.

Seminary trustee David Tolliver, pastor of First Church in Excelsior Springs, Mo., said the seminary did not need to wait for the outcome of the court action to determine whether to remove funds.

"It would take too long, perhaps more than a year," Tolliver said. "It's the principle. The

Missouri Baptist Foundation felt they should go self-perpetuating and didn't wait to go before the convention for approval, so why should we wait? The Missouri Baptist Foundation is not part of the Southern Baptist Convention through an affiliation with the Missouri Baptist Convention, and by our bylaws, we have to have our funds invested in an SBC entity. We are making a clear statement."

Trustees left open the possibility of moving seminary funds back to the Missouri Baptist Foundation if it becomes affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention again. The seminary will incur an estimated cost of \$1,800 to transfer the funds. Robert Kellogg, president of the Oklahoma foundation, presented information about the foundation's investments to trustees during their regular spring meeting March 10-11 at the Embassy Suites in Kansas City.

In other business, trustees:

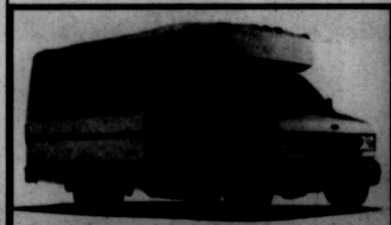
- approved a \$4.8 million budget for the 2003-04 fiscal year, about \$100,000 less than the budget approved at last year's spring meeting. Budget cuts reflected a 2.14 percent decrease overall for 2003-04. Cuts came as a result of a decrease in monies received from the Cooperative Program and other sources.

- heard a report that the current year's budget has been decreased by 3.66%.

- approved the implementation of an associate of arts degree. The two-year degree program is scheduled to begin this fall with start-up costs of about \$95,000. Stephen J. Andrews, professor of Old Testament, Hebrew and archaeology, will direct the undergraduate program, which will include visiting teachers (adjuncts). The degree will replace the current diploma studies program, which has experienced declining numbers.

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50 YEARS AND BEYOND

CELEBRATION SERVICES

March 30

Two Great Services
9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
(No Sunday School)

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 20, 2003

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



GA Mother/ Daughter Overnight

April 11-12, 2003
Camp Garaywa
(for girls
grades 1-6)

Cost: \$33 per person
(includes meals, lodging,
insurance and program fees)

The registration deadline is March 28, 2003. For more information, contact the WMU Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 in Jackson.

Perry Association Missions Blitz June 23-28

- **WHO?** Mission volunteers of all ages. (adult, collegiate, youth, children).
- **WHAT?** A Missions Blitz sponsored by the Perry Association in partnership with Mississippi WMU. During this week volunteers will participate in a variety of ministry projects (ex: VBS, BYBC, prayerwalking, door-to-door outreach, block parties, light construction, and "acts of kindness" such as oil changes, apartment cleanup, and community cleanup).
There will be a *Family Missions* emphasis on Saturday, June 28. Parents, grandparents, and etc.... are encouraged to participate with their children/grandchildren in family projects on Saturday.
- **WHEN?** The Missions Blitz begins on Sunday and concludes on Saturday. The *Family Missions* emphasis will take place on Saturday, June 28.
- **WHERE?** Ministry projects will be held all over the Perry County area.
- **HOW much does it COST?** A \$25 per person ministry fee with a maximum \$50 per family. Volunteers will provide their own housing, meals, and transportation. (Some meals will be provided and housing options are listed in the registration packet.) Participants volunteering only during the *Family Missions* emphasis on Saturday will pay \$5 per person or a maximum of \$15 per family (this includes lunch).
- **HOW to Register?** To receive a registration packet with more information, please contact the Mississippi WMU office at 1-800-748-1651 or E-mail tanderson@mbcb.org. The **DEADLINE to register is June 6**. You may contact the on-site coordinator, Buddy Keyes, at FBC Richton (601-788-9607).

Reaching Families...Changing Lives

featuring
Richard
Leach

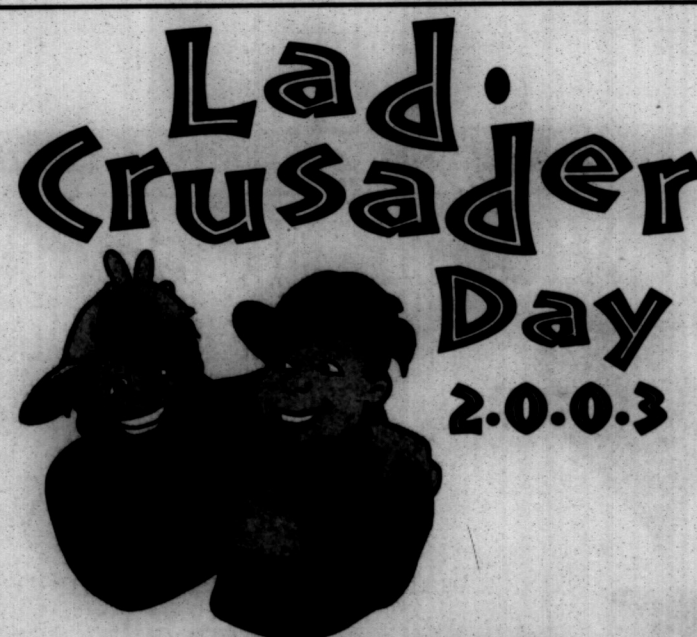
Examine the families around you.
You won't have to look too far to see
that there are families who are hurting,
lonely, and feeling unloved.
They are looking for a touch ...

... a touch that could
have Everlasting Consequences.

Your Sunday School class may be the vessel that
God uses to reach families in your community.

April 22 • FBC, Biloxi
April 24 • FBC, Grenada
6:30-8:30 p.m.

This conference is designed for pastors, staff, Sunday School directors, and all church leadership who have an interest in reaching others for Christ. For more information, call the Sunday School Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 in Jackson.



Central Hills Baptist Retreat
Kosciusko

April 26, 2003
9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Cost: \$4
Bring a sack lunch.
(Drink will be provided.)

Register Early! DEADLINE: APRIL 15
Come and meet our missionaries

For more info, call Men's Ministry Department,
1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson, 601-292-3335.

Central Hills

SUMMER CAMPS 2003

LAD & DAD WEEKEND CAMPS

for campers in grades 1-3 and their dads

June 20-21 July 18-19

MOTHER & SON WEEKEND CAMP

for campers in grades 1-3 and their mothers

June 13-14

Total Cost: \$40 per camper or
\$80 for an adult and child

SUMMER MISSIONS CAMPS FOR BOYS

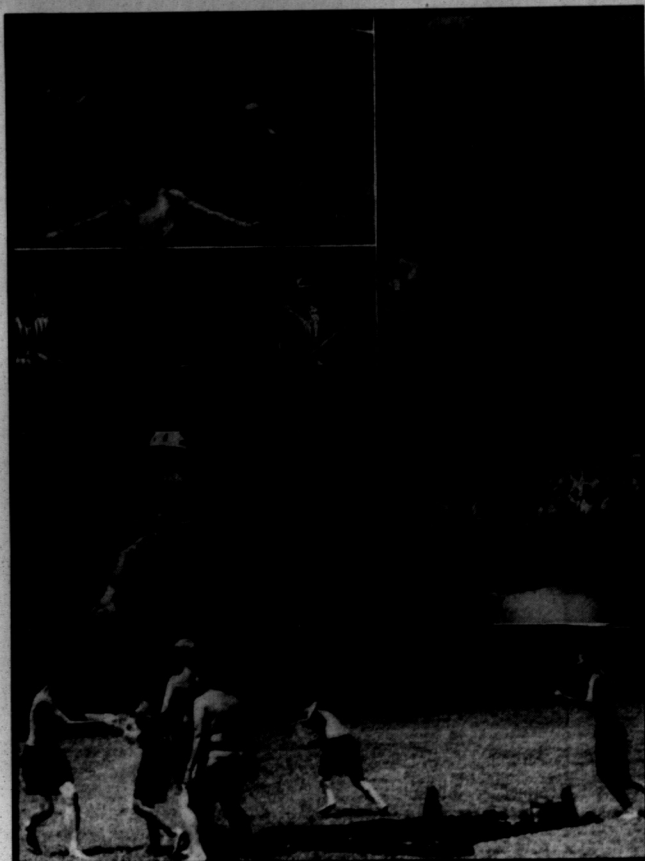
for campers in grades 4-12

June 9-13	July 7-11
June 16-20	July 14-18
June 23-27	July 21-25

Total Cost: \$125 per camper, includes:
registration fee, crafts fee, snack fee,
lodging & limited supplemental insurance

Note This!

Each camper (adult and child) will complete
a Registration-Health-and-Information Form.
This form is available from your church,
association office and Central Hills.



CHILDREN'S MISSIONS CAMP (CO-ED)

for campers in grades 3-6

June 2-4 **Total Cost:** \$85 per camper

CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL CAMP FOR BOYS & GIRLS

for campers in grades 4-6

June 30-July 2

Total Cost: \$85 per camper

For more information, contact

Central Hills Baptist Retreat

P.O. Box 698, Kosciusko, MS 39090-0698

662-289-9730 Fax: 662-289-9718

E-mail: plyler@mbcb.org

2003

Preaching & Worship Conference

Featured Presenters:

Waylon Bailey
& Bill Clark

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Development Department at
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in Jackson, 601-292-3305,
or E-mail kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

With All My Heart

You are invited to the

Sisters Who Care House Party

This house party is for all women ... bring a
sister that's a different culture from you.

May 23-24, 2003 • Patterson Place
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

Becky Brown
Worship Leader

Carol Mickel will share her heart
about her recent mission trips.

For more info, call the WMU Department at 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson at 601-968-3800.

Sisters Who Care House Party Registration

DEADLINE - MAY 14

Cost per person for lodging, meals & registration:

Patterson Place Lodging: 1 @ \$35, 2 @ \$30, 3 @ \$25, 4 @ \$20 per person

Meals: \$7 Fri. dinner, \$5 Sat. breakfast, \$6 Sat. lunch per person

Registration: \$5 per person

Day rate for Saturday including meals: \$16 per person

Church _____ Association _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Number of Women: _____ X cost per person = Total enclosed \$ _____

MAIL TO "SISTERS WHO CARE HOUSE PARTY"

P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

State Bible Drills

DATE	LOCATION	REGISTRATION	DRILLS BEGIN
Thursday April 1	Cleveland, FBC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Friday April 2	McComb, FBC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Thursday April 3	Tupelo, Calvary Baptist Church	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Friday April 4	Tupelo, FBC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Friday April 5	Starkville, FBC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Saturday April 6	Columbus, FBC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Saturday April 7	Madison, FBC	8:30 a.m.-noon	9 a.m.
Sunday April 8	Clinton, FBC	1-4 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
Sunday April 9	Hattiesburg, Temple Baptist Church (west campus)	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Monday April 10	Meridian, Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Tuesday April 11	Meridian, Salem Heights Baptist Church	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Wednesday April 12	Meridian, FBC	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.
Thursday April 13	Meridian, Hernando Baptist Church	2-4:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.

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Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Conference

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 24

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Gaye Martin



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Central Hills SUMMER CAMPS 2003

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at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 334, or in Jackson, 292-3334

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For program information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
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Pray this day for...

March 21-April 3, 2003

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"Prayer is the easiest and hardest of all things: the simplest and the sublimest: the weakest and the most powerful: its results lie outside the range of human possibilities - they are limited only by the omnipotence of God." E.M. Bounds

Pray for Zimbabwe as it approaches bankruptcy. There is very little gasoline, and long lines of cars at the few stations who get some in. There are long lines for bread also with other basics like flour, cornmeal, oil and sugar very scarce. AIDS continues to claim people daily. Pray that God will use these hardships to turn hearts toward Jesus.

areas of northern Pakistan that have not been previously accessible are opening up for witnessing opportunities. Pray that these doors will remain open for the gospel to be shared in the cities, villages, mountains and valleys.

One out of every five people in

For: (1) FAITH Training, Trinity BC, Southaven, noon, 24th - 9 p.m., 27th (SS and LifeWay); (2) Fear of persecution continues to be a contributing factor for those who reject the gospel in the Caribbean. Pray for many who have heard the gospel but feel they must not believe.

the world live in China, and the vast majority of them have not yet received Jesus. Many of them have never even heard about the Savior. But many Christians are committed to telling the story of salvation. Pray today for all who share Christ in China, asking God to use them to make His name known. For (1) Bible Drills, FBC,

Please continue to pray for those governing China, praying that their hearts and minds will be open to the claims of Christ. Presently, there are an estimated 60 million active Communists in China. Although the governing party adheres to atheism, many of the individual party members are increasingly open to the gospel.

Cleveland, and FBC, McComb, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. (D&FM); (2) Buddhist holidays are difficult times for Thailand students who profess Christ because of the pressure from friends to participate in the celebrations or be ostracized. Pray that the students would be bold in their stand for Christ. Team Scotland invites you to

Pray for Jon Smith as Baptist collegiate ministry director at Indiana University and its leadership team in Bloomington, Ind. Pray for Christians on campus to live a Christlike life and for unity among all churches and student organizations. Also pray for Jon's family.

intercede for over 800 Scottish teenagers who heard the gospel as Baptist representative Mark Baker was allowed to share in school-wide assemblies in the district of Sutherland, in the Highlands of Scotland. Pray for Mark as he continues to do follow-up with these schools and their head teachers. For: (1) Bible Drills, FBC,

For: (1) Young Pastors' Retreat, Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville, 2 p.m., 27th - 3 p.m., 28th (P/LD); (2) Governor Tauese P. Sunia of American Samoa (southwestern Pacific Ocean); (3) Pray for Saudi Arabs of Saudi Arabia asking for personal encounters for them with the living Lord.

Tupelo and Calvary BC, Tupelo, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. (D&FM); (2) Pray for Hu Jianto, vice president of China who was recently elected general secretary of the Communist Party. As President Jiang Zemin transitions out of power, Mr. Hu will soon be the most influential leader in China.

Pray for the ministry of discipleship in the Zambian churches. Pray for those who are involved in leading various discipleship programs and for those who are being discipled. Pray that the number of persons involved in discipleship programs in the Greater Lusaka Area churches will increase.

For: (1) Young Ringers Festival, FBC, Brandon, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (CM); (2) Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Vietnam (southeastern Asia); (3) Prime Minister Abdul-Qadir Ba Jamal of Yemen (southern Arabian Peninsula).

Norman Cannada and Deborah serve as church planter strategists working with urban churches in the Charleston, W. Va. area. Norman asks that we pray for his family, his wife, Deborah and their two sons, James and Billy. He says that when people want your time and such, you sometimes forget your family." Due to various circumstances,



NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Friday and Saturday, March 14-15

Guest speaker, Audrey Hector

New Salem Baptist Church, Iuka

For more info, call the WMU Department in Jackson or Amanda Lambert at 662-423-3765.

**Mississippi WMU: 1-800-748-1651
or in Jackson, 601-292-3324**

Looking for a good **WOMEN'S EVENT** to attend? Check these out...

NORTH MISSISSIPPI WOMEN'S CELEBRATION

The Work of One

Friday and Saturday, March 21-22

Guest speaker, Marie Strain

Slayden Baptist Church, Slayden

For more info, call the WMU Department in Jackson or Norma Egbert at 662-252-4559.

2003 LADIES SPRING CONFERENCE

Planted by Streams of Water

Friday and Saturday, April 4-5

Guest speaker, Janet Pope

First Baptist Church, Starkville

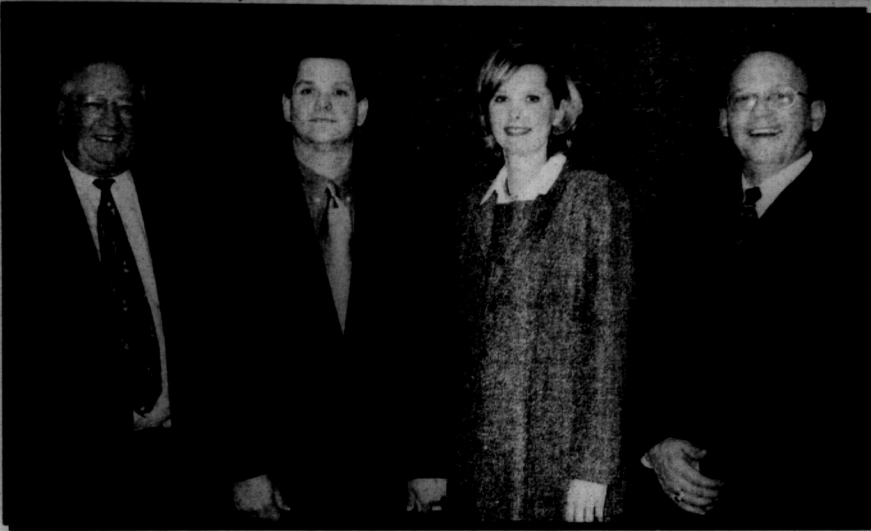
For more info, call the WMU Department in Jackson or Gayle Kraker at 662-324-1414.

HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Parkway Church, Hernando, ordained Chris Fleming as a deacon on Feb. 9. Pictured (from left) are David Edwards, Fleming, his wife Shannon, and Mike Ramage, pastor.

Lucille Knight has completed 15 years of volunteer work at the North Delta



David Edwards, Chris & Shannon Fleming, and Mike Ramage



Knight

Baptist Associational Office and Ministry Center, Clarksdale. Knight has been a valuable asset in helping staff, working with

volunteers, and assisting with clients needs.

Academy Church, Blue Mountain, ordained Jerry Garrison and Hayes Frazier as deacons on Feb. 2. David Adkins, who had been previously ordained, was installed as deacon. Pictured (from left) are Garrison, Adkins, Frazier, and Earl Barron, pastor.



Matt, Nathan, and Paige Maxwell



Reggie Bridges, pastor & Jonathan Mitchell

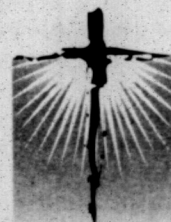
Nathan Maxwell, Lynn Ray Road Church, Petal, raised over \$350 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Pictured (from left) are Maxwell's father Matt, Maxwell, and his mother Paige.

Jonathan Mitchell, Pine Grove Church, Picayune, was recently presented a 4 year perfect attendance certificate for Sunday School. Pictured (from left) are Reggie Bridges, pastor, and Jonathan Mitchell.



Garrison, Adkins, Frazier, & Barron

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STAFF CHANGES



Wicker

Theological Seminary. Wicker previously served at Springdale Church, West.

Salem Church, Tylertown, has called Mark Wicker as pastor. He is a graduate of New Orleans Baptist



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sin and freedom from eternal death.
(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name
(John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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Deaf leader dies at 96 in Jackson

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Leonard Asbridge, one of five founders of the Southern Baptist Convention for the Deaf, died of heart failure on March 5 in Jackson. He was 96 years of age.

Born in west Tennessee, Asbridge was left deaf at the age of seven after a bout with spinal meningitis. He went on to attend the Tennessee School for the Deaf in Knoxville, where he was a star athlete in track and field, baseball and football. He returned to Dyer County upon graduation and began a 52-year career as a printer.

Asbridge worked for 33 years setting up type for The Commercial Appeal newspaper and the now-defunct Memphis Press-Scimitar newspaper in Memphis. While in the printing business, Asbridge spent nearly 20 years as a Baptist minister to the deaf and a "circuit rider," preaching and establishing new deaf congregations throughout Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi. He was especially involved in deaf congregations in Memphis and Jackson, Miss.

Asbridge and his wife Doris, who was also hearing impaired, were two of the original five founders of the Southern Baptist Convention for the Deaf in 1948. The idea grew from a need to have something similar to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting but geared toward deaf people.

Asbridge was also known for his role as the "Silent Santa," hired by the Coca-Cola Bottling plant to play Santa at the company's annual Christmas party for deaf children. He could speak in their language when other Santas could not, and his role as the Silent Santa grew throughout the community.

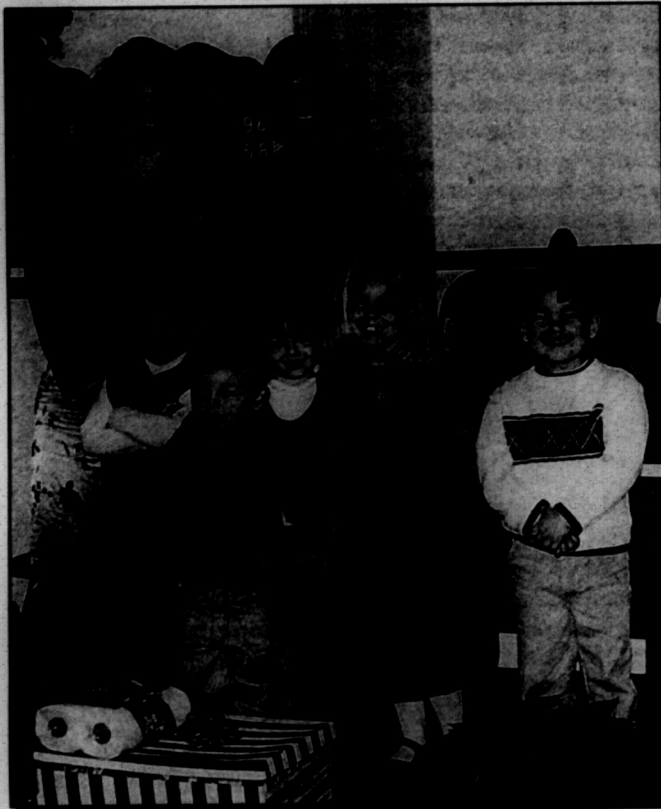
Asbridge was preceded in death by his wife and is survived by two daughters, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held March 10 at Memorial Park Cemetery in Memphis.

The 39ers of Calvary Church, Pascagoula, recently held an Old Fashioned Valentine Party. Ernie Sadler is interim pastor.

The Mission Friends of Branch Church, Morton, presented a Christmas Box full of canned items and other necessities to the church in December to be given to a fam-

ily in need. Pictured are Creston Giles, Olivia Lampkin, Karleigh Mahaffey, Austin Coward, Michael Ray Latham, and leaders Kathy Latham and Courtney Gordon.

Harmontown Church, Como, held high attendance day on March 9. Their goal of 125 in Sunday School was exceeded by 1.



Mission Friends of Branch Church, Morton



39ers Group of Calvary Church, Pascagoula



Harmontown Church, Como

Mississippians elected to NOBTS leadership

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) trustees elected a pair of Mississippi Baptists to leadership positions during their spring meeting on March 11-12, and set a course for continued growth by approving a \$1.75 million renovation of Farnsworth Apartments and \$2.7 million for expansion of Providence Guest House.

Jerry Smith, pastor of First Church, Summit, was elected vice chairman, while Phillip Hanberry, a member of Temple Church, Hattiesburg, was elected secretary-treasurer. Tommy French of Baton Rouge, La., was elected trustee chairman.

Both the Farnsworth Apartments project and the construction of the recently-completed Manor apartment

project were made possible by the success of the New Horizons campaign.

In his report to trustees, Charles Harvey, vice president for development, announced that the campaign has surpassed the challenge goal of \$12 million. To date, the campaign has raised \$12.4 million in pledges and gifts, with additional pledges coming in daily. Harvey also was encouraged by the strong participation of trustee members in New Horizons giving.

"People have confidence in what we are doing," Harvey said. "They are showing this trust by investing in God's Kingdom work at NOBTS."

The \$2.7 million approved for the Providence Guest House construction project will help extension students who travel to New Orleans

for workshop courses and strengthen the seminary's MissionLab program. MissionLab is a program that offers church groups the opportunity to experience urban missions in the greater New Orleans area.

The Providence Guest House construction project will replace the aging east wing and center wing of the current Providence Guest House located across the street from Hardin Student Center.

The building will be named in honor of the late William M. Hamm Jr., a former

trustee, foundation board member and longtime supporter of NOBTS.

The project includes the demolition of 60 rooms, the construction of a two-story, 60-unit complex of hotel-style rooms, construction of a parking area and landscaping enhancements on the site.

The project is set to begin in late May and is to be completed by December.

The board also approved a new budget that includes an increase in salary and benefits for faculty and staff members, as well as modest increases in student tuition.

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Beer flap ruins chance for championship

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—A promotional agreement between Busch beer and the Bass Angler Sportsman Society (BASS) will keep America's most famous fisherman from vying for top prize money in 2003 but it will also bring more money and visibility to the sport, a BASS spokesman told Baptist Press March 12.

Baptist Press reported March 10 that fishing legend Jimmy Houston, a deacon at First Southern Baptist Church in the eastern Oklahoma town of Keys, opted out of the running for the Busch BASS Angler of the Year competition rather than wear a Busch jacket patch and use a Busch logo on his boat.

Consequently, Houston is ineligible for points needed to qualify for the coveted \$100,000 prize, which he has twice won. Houston said since the story broke he has received phone calls from "all over the country" supporting his decision.

Meanwhile, Baptist Press learned March 13 that Houston is not alone among active competitors in his refusal to promote Busch. Georgia angler Paul Hanley and Mark Rose of Arkansas also have forfeited Busch BASS Angler of the Year points for not donning the Busch logo. Previously, Houston believed he was the lone hold-out among active BASS anglers.

A fourth fishing pro, Lendell Martin, a member of Highway 157 Church in Nacogdoches, Texas, chose not to compete in any BASS events in 2003. Martin told Baptist Press he withdrew his entry fee after he learned in the fall that BASS would require its anglers to use the Busch logos in its Angler of the Year program.

Meanwhile, Martin is trying to earn qualification on the Wal-Mart FLW Tour, the other

major bass fishing circuit. Wal-Mart FLW has no alcohol or tobacco sponsors, Martin said.

Four other BASS competitors have opted out of the Angler of the Year program for apparent business reasons. BASS spokesman Christopher Murray said he thinks contractual conflicts involving their personal endorsements and the Busch-BASS agreement forced their decisions.

Murray said Busch and BASS — along with parent company ESPN, which bought BASS in 2001 — agreed to an undisclosed multi-year deal for sponsorship of the BASS Angler of the Year program.

That multi-year deal might send some anglers to exclusively fish the Wal-Mart FLW Tour, said Hanley, who speaks often to youngsters about the dangers of substance abuse.

Murray said the Busch partnership is BASS' first such venture and has helped raise the Angler of the Year prize from \$25,000 last year to \$100,000 in 2003 plus another \$100,000 to be split among the remaining top nine finishers.

"We respect everybody's personal beliefs," Murray said. "Anheuser-Busch has been on the sports landscape a long time as a sponsor and we are trying to increase revenue for our anglers and increase visibility for our sport."

Murray noted BASS' strict rules against alcohol use during competition and Anheuser-Busch's safe boating education program. He added, "We're not telling people to drink. We're saying if you're going to drink, choose Busch."

The 49-year-old Martin, a BASS veteran who has qualified for five BASSMaster Classics — arguably the most prestigious of bass fishing tournaments —

said he withdrew his entry fee last fall after learning of the Busch logo requirement. Martin said he struggled with alcohol abuse as a young man and wanted no part of BASS after the Busch logo agreement was mandated.

"They changed the rules on us in mid-stream. I already had sponsors lined up. It was a slap in the face," Martin said. "I laid awake several nights trying to decide what to do. I'm living for the Lord, not for BASS. It's ended up costing me a lot of money, but I don't ever want to lose my Christian testimony."

In fact, Martin said he had to gain new sponsors because of some he lost when he withdrew from BASS competition. "[BASS] kept talking about NASCAR and how beer sponsors have elevated its status. I told them, 'Hey, I'm a bass fisherman. I'm not a NASCAR driver.'"

Martin said it is hypocritical of BASS, which tells kids to "get hooked on fishing, not drugs," to promote alcohol.

"I've never seen anything good come out of a can of beer," Martin said. The money issue is the only thing good that came



NO BEER — Fishing and faith are what motivate top angler Jimmy Houston, not financial gain from beer sponsorships. The Bass Angler Sportsman Society (BASS) has shown Houston the door for his refusal to go along with the group's demand that members display a beer company logo. (BP photo)

out of (the Busch-BASS agreement), and I feel they could have gotten another sponsor and done just as well."

Houston and his wife, Chris, were instrumental in founding FOCAS (www.focas.org) in 1983. It boasts a membership of more than 2,500 anglers with 40 chapters nationwide. He said the BASS tour includes many FOCAS members and he said he counts many of those complying with the Busch logo rule as Christian brothers and friends.

Editor's note: The BASS organization can be contacted at P.O. Box 17900 Montgomery, AL 36141-0900. Telephone: (334) 272-9530. Fax: (334) 279-7148. E-mail: bassmail@mindspring.com, or customerservice@bassmaster.com.

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Young boy sparks stand on alcohol

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) -- When Jimmy Houston heard the news that the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS) pro fishing circuit would require its anglers to promote Busch beer on boats and clothing apparel during official events, he thought of the 12-year-old boy he'd led to Christ last spring.

First Southern Baptist Church in Keys, Okla. — Houston's home church — helped sponsor a youth rally featuring Christian musicians Audio Adrenaline, with the young man among dozens responding to an invitation to accept Christ.

After Houston prayed with the boy, he asked the famed fisherman for a favor: "Will you talk to my dad about his drinking problem?"

Reluctantly, Houston agreed. The boy's dad, a Vietnam veteran, was receptive but said he didn't have a drinking problem.

Houston told him, "If what you're telling me is true, it doesn't sound to me like you have a drinking problem, either. However, if your son thinks it's a problem, then it's a problem."

Houston asked the man if he wished for his son to drink and the man replied he did not. "Well, sir, he's going to do what you do," Houston told him.

"I've got grandsons, 13 and 16, and a 5-year-old granddaughter," Houston said, "but the first thing that popped into my mind when I heard [about the Busch sponsorship] was that little boy."

In addition to fishing, Houston has several retail outlets that bear his name — including one on Lake Tenkiller in eastern Oklahoma.

"Someone asked me about being ineligible for the \$100,000 Angler of the Year prize and I told them that it already costs me \$50,000 a year in pure profit not to sell beer at my store near Tenkiller."

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God wants me to be loving

1 Samuel 18:1-19:7

By Lori Clendinning

"O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home! Under the shadow of thy throne Thy saints have dwelt secure; Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defense is sure."

Isaac Watts penned these lyrics nearly 300 years ago and yet they speak to our great need for God's protection in 2003. In this week's lesson the focus is again upon two prayers: Jabez's prayer for protection in 1 Chronicles 4, and the prayer for security recorded as Psalm 91. Both prayers focus on the truth that God hears and answers our prayers for deliverance.

Jabez prayed for personal deliverance and the Bible records that God answered his prayer. Psalm 91, however, has undergone scrutiny as to its authorship

and whether it is a psalm for personal protection or one of corporate deliverance.

Some Bible scholars believe Psalm 91 is a companion poem to Psalm 90 and was most likely used in a worship setting. Believed to be written by a worship leader who used it as a word of instruction, the psalmist wrote of the promise for worshipers in need of divine help. Other scholars believe it to be the words of King David, offering up a noble song of trust in his Protector, based on personal experience.

Whoever he might have been, the psalmist testified to four areas of security for those who trust in God:

Strengthen My Faith: Believers can turn to God for security when danger threatens. Through use of strong imagery,



Clendinning

the author reminds us that God is the source of divine protection and security: a "refuge... fortress... the secret place."

God hears and is able to answer the prayers of His people when we turn to Him for protection in threatening situations. God is able to protect and to deliver believers in threatening situations. He hears and is able to answer His people's prayers when we turn to Him for help. We should rely on God for protection in threatening situations, having confidence and trust in God's promise to protect His children.

Calm My Fears: Beyond the basic idea of protection, the psalmist includes many acts of providential care as well as active deliverance: "Surely He shall deliver thee... cover thee."

Many scholars believe that this psalm was used by Jewish priests in warding off demons. The Jewish holy book, the Talmud, suggests that this psalm may be used in the case of demonic attacks, referring to the "terror by

night" phrase in connection to the night demon Lilith. Likewise, the phrase "pestilence... in darkness" might refer to the demon Namtar, thus causing some Jewish priests to use the psalm to ward off demonic activity.

Regardless of its original use or intent, the psalm carefully directs readers to be consciously aware of God's care amid life's difficult and dangerous situations.

Guard My Steps: The psalmist assures his readers that God will further protect them by the sending forth of guardian angels, "giving His angels charge concerning you." The Talmud states that every man has two ministering angels beside him during his entire life to protect him from plagues and stumbling. However, we are not to use these verses as an excuse to live recklessly or to act presumptuously to test whether God will deliver us from danger.

Amazingly, Satan attempted to ensnare Jesus through a perverted interpretation of these same verses, as recorded in Matthew 4:6. Jesus responded by saying, "You shall not put

the Lord your God to the test." For purposes of testing our faith and refining us for His glory, God may, indeed, permit "bad" things to happen to His beloved children.

Regardless, we are to trust our wonderful Heavenly Father, knowing that no power is outside of God's control. We can take comfort in knowing that nothing happens to us that hasn't already been sifted through the hands of God.

Answer My Prayers: Finally, the writer of Psalm 91 gives promise of an eightfold blessing within these verses: I will rescue him. I will protect him. I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him...and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him...and show him my salvation.

God's blessings of divine protection, providence, reward, and promise are for every believer who has come to love and trust God. Praise be to our wonderful and almighty God... our sure help in ages past and our steadfast hope for years to come!

Clendinning is member of First Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Claim the Lord's Promises

I Kings 8:22-30, 56

By Harold Simmons

Introduction: "Dad, you promised me that you would take me to a ball game, and this Saturday there is a game here in town. Would you take me to see it?" The boy is claiming the promise that his dad had made to him. The Bible is replete with the promises of God. He has made promises that apply to all people as well as promises for specific things to specific people. In our scripture passage, Solomon is claiming a promise of God.

Affirm God's Faithfulness (1 Kings 8:22-24). Solomon is standing before the whole assembly of Israel praying in a public worship service of dedication. Unlike the worship experience Solomon had in Gibeon, he spread out his

hands toward heaven. This time he is not just praying for himself but on behalf of the whole of Israel.

Solomon began by praising God for who He is and by giving thanks for God's faithfulness to His promises. Solomon acknowledges that the reason for God keeping His promise about the temple was that his people had followed God's instructions with their whole hearts. A covenant (promise) is conditioned on both sides of the covenant.

There is a lesson here for us today. God makes a promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14. If there is a calamity among the people of God, if the people will pray, humble themselves, and seek God's face, He will heal their land. We have had calamities in



Simmons

our land in the last couple of years- The World Trade Center, the economy, the threat of war. "Where will it all end?" we ask. God who is faithful to His promises has told us.

If we do the things that God asks, He will heal our land of the calamities. Healing takes time and time requires that we remain faithful and patient. After 9/11 there was a surge of religious activity in the United States, but it was short lived. God is faithful and we should be also.

Pray in Accord with God's Promises (1 Kings 8:25-26). God made a promise to David that his son would build the temple to honor God's name. He kept that promise even though David had been dead for at least seven years. In these verses, Solomon claimed the promise that God had made to David concerning a descendent upon the throne. Notice that Solomon made each claim in prayer.

When you take jewelry to be

repaired or garments to a laundry, you are given a slip of paper with numbers on it and a description of the article. This is your proof that you have left something of value in the care of another person. Later, you will come back and claim your property. The paper is your claim check. Prayer is one of the ways we present to God our "claim check" to His promises.

Trust God to Answer (1 Kings 6: 27-30, 56). David never saw the completion of the temple in his lifetime, but God was faithful to that promise and the temple was completed.

Solomon continued his prayer during the dedication ceremony by praising God and recognizing that God is too great to be contained in a structure. Yet, Solomon asks God to hear the prayers of the people as they pray "toward this place." Solomon was wise enough to know that we human beings who are bound by time, space and matter, can more easily relate to God by means of something

material. When we want to talk with God in prayer in a very earnest way, we go to church house to pray. Neither the church building nor the temple can contain God, but, for us as for the Israelites, the structure is a symbol of the presence of God. It is, therefore, important that we attend church and there offer our heart felt prayers to claim the promises that God has given. God also gave a visual of his love through his son, Jesus, for our better understanding.

In verse 56 Solomon praised God for giving peace to his people. He also asked for God to hear and forgive his people. The implication is that God has been faithful to His other promises and that He will be faithful in His promise to forgive. Therefore, we can trust God for forgiveness. Trust Him with your life today! Ask God for forgiveness of your sins and He will forgive no matter the nature of your sins.

Simmons is the pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.

For more information, contact the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Parents warned to study spring break offers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — For parents of high school and college students, spring break is often a time to reward their children with a carefree trip to a sun-drenched beach, but for the thousands of students plan-

ning to descend on beach towns and international resorts during spring break, the opportunity for fun in the sun could be more than they or their parents bargained for.

A review of a few travel websites promoting week-long spring break packages for students reveals a shrewd marketing strategy aimed at luring students to Mexican beach attractions with "50 hours of free drinking" where the legal age is 18 and enforcement is lax.

For example, one spring break-oriented website pitches Cancun, Mexico, as the ultimate playground for under-age American students where "your yearly intake of alcoholic consumption could happen in one small week..." Another package featured on the website promotes Amsterdam as a "pot-smokers paradise" due to liberal drug laws.

The website further describes the Cancun package by stating: "For those of you worried about what your parents might say, tell them it's an 'educational trip.' You are working to graduate college with a minor in heavy drinking. And best of all Mom, I don't have to worry about drinking the water and getting sick, because I will only be drinking beer. For all of the novice drinkers out there, remember this fail-proof saying to avoid near catastrophe while in Cancun: 'Beer before liquor makes you sicker, liquor before beer you're in the clear.'"

Tour organizers for international destinations such as Cancun, Mazatlan, Acapulco, Jamaica and the Bahamas are quick to disclaim any responsibility for the actions of those who purchase their spring break packages which usually include airfare, lodging, meals and

unlimited alcohol in nightclubs. Students who sign up for the trips must sign liability waivers that absolve tour companies from any fault for practically anything that could go wrong.

Nevertheless, many of these companies are aggressively marketing a no-holds-barred, seven-day party with the promise of free-flowing alcohol. "Nothing [in Cancun] happens in moderation, so be prepared to test your limits," an ad on another student-oriented travel website declares.

"We're not going to stick our heads in the sand and talk around the subject of partying," a disclaimer on one site states. "A lot of students — not all, but a lot — view spring break as a big stress-relief party. And yes, that may entail some things Mom and Dad or Ma and Pa U.S. Culture might not look upon fondly."

Neither should parents be caught unaware while liquor and beer companies unleash this seductive assault on their teens and young adults, says Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

"While our nation's ongoing struggle with substance abuse can be traced to many causes, the family and the church remain the two institutions best suited to confront the issues and provide the help hurting individuals need," Land said. "A strong family supported by a strong church is the best defense against substance abuse. When the family and the church are healthy and functioning as God intends, they provide a haven where those in need can find the emotional and physical support, encouragement, stability and connection to grow in God's strength and grace."

Citing a survey conducted last year by the American Medical Association which showed that 73 percent of parents of college and high school-aged students were unaware of the all-you-can-drink trips, Land said parents must not abdicate their responsibility to do all they can to protect their families from the aggressive tactics employed by the alcohol and tourism industry.

To that end, the ERLC has created a ministry resource called the Culture Response Kit to help churches and families address an array of issues dealing with substance abuse, including alcohol, tobacco and drugs. This issue-specific kit includes relevant Bible study helps, cutting-edge research and statistical information, as well as the leading resource material on a particular moral, ethical, or cultural issue.

"The Culture Response Kit is packed with valuable tools to help you and your family engage the most critical moral issues facing our culture today from a truly biblical perspective," Land said.

According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, binge drinking episodes among 18- to 20-year-olds increased by 56%, an average of 15 times per year in 2001. Adults 21- 25 years old averaged 18 drinking binges in 2001. Binge drinking among all adults increased to 1.5 billion episodes during 2001, an average of seven times per person. The complete findings from the survey are published in the January 2003 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Editor's note: For more information about the ERLC's Culture Response Kit, go online at www.faithandfamily.com or call (800) 475-9127.



Bibliocipher

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WYI BR HWQI,
DBRSROYXP HBWKK DR
KQCRY XBR CQYUIPG PE
UPI? PS DQXB DBWX
APGTWSQHPY HBWKK DR
APGTWSR QX?
GWSC EPOS: XBQSL

Clue: R=S

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 3:35

Study: most alcohol consumed illegally, excessively

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A recent study concludes that underage drinkers and adult excessive drinkers are responsible for 50.1% of alcohol consumption and 48.9% of consumer expenditure on alcohol in the United States. The report in The Journal of the American Medical Association was conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse and is being contested by the liquor industry.

"The response by the liquor industry does not surprise me," said Barrett Duke, vice president for research with the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville. "The findings of the report are so devastating to the alcohol industry that they feel compelled to do all they can to discredit it. Despite the objections of the liquor industry, I believe this report utilized a solid methodology and that its findings are legitimate, though disheartening."

Drinking habits of more than 200,000 people age 12 and older were studied for the report. The proportion of 12- to 20-year-olds who consume alcohol was estimated to be 50%, using data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The proportion of adults age 21 or older who consume

alcohol was estimated to be 52.8%, using data from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System. The estimated total number of drinks consumed per month was 4.21 billion, and underage drinkers consumed 19.7% of the total.

The amount of excessive adult drinking (more than two drinks per day) was 30.4%. Consumer expenditure on alcohol in the United States in 1999 was \$116.2 billion. Of that amount, \$22.5 billion was attributed to underage drinking and \$34.4 billion was attributed to adult excessive drinking.

The study also noted that underage drinking was beginning earlier, with the proportion of children who started drinking by the eighth grade increasing 33% from 1975 to 2001. The report said that a child who begins drinking before age 15 is four times as likely to become an alcoholic than someone who starts at 21 or later.

"It saddens me to think that so many of our youth have been enticed to engage in behavior that destroys millions of lives every year," Duke said. "No one can estimate the full cost to our nation that alcohol abuse will exact from our youth. Many of them will never reach adulthood, many others will be crippled by alcoholism the

rest of their lives, and millions will live with the scars of alcohol abuse."

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse's definition of "excessive drinking" has been questioned by the liquor industry, according to a New York Times article Feb. 26 on the day the study was released. A liquor industry lobbying group has vigorously attacked the study and accused its authors of "manipulating data for sensational headlines," The Times reported.

Duke said it is inconceivable that any responsible party would seek to profit from the lives of the nation's youth. The liquor industry has not demonstrated a commitment to protect youth from its deadly products, he said, but with their latest products — such as alcopops, fizzy soft-drink-like beverages which allow alcohol to be introduced into the bloodstream while bypassing the taste buds — expose a sinister campaign to raise up another generation of alcoholics in order to keep their profits flowing.

Duke said it is time that Americans come to grips with the truth that the alcohol industry wants their children, and responsible adults must resolve to counter the industry's efforts with every legal means available.